

**IN THE CLAIMS**

Claim 1 (original): A communication system comprising:  
one or more gateways coupled to a terrestrial network;  
one or more subscriber terminals that are to be coupled to the terrestrial network; and  
a communication satellite providing forward and return communication links between the one or more gateways and the one or more subscriber terminals that each comprise a switching network that selectively couples signals between selected gateways and selected subscriber terminals using predetermined beams.

Claim 2 (original): The communication system recited in Claim 1 wherein the terrestrial network comprises the Internet.

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Claim 3 (original): The communication system recited in Claim 1 wherein the forward communication link implemented in the communication satellite comprises:  
a plurality of first switches that receive data transmitted from a respective plurality of gateways;  
one or more forward channel gateway multiplexers selectively coupled to one of the plurality of first switches;  
a plurality of second switches selectively coupled to outputs of the plurality of first switches and selectively coupled to outputs of the one or more forward channel gateway multiplexers; and  
one or more regional multiplexers selectively coupled to the plurality of second switches that output data to a plurality of regions servicing the one or more subscriber terminals.

Claim 4 (currently amended): The communication system recited in ~~Claim 4~~ Claim 3 wherein selected ones of the pluralities of first and second switches comprise power dividing hybrids.

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Claim 5 (original): The communication system recited in Claim 1 wherein the forward communication link implemented in the communication satellite comprises:

- a first switch for receiving data transmitted from a first gateway;
- a third switch for receiving data transmitted from a second gateway;
- a forward channel gateway multiplexer coupled to the first switch;
- a second switch coupled to the first switch and to a first output of the forward channel gateway multiplexer;
- a fourth switch coupled to the third switch and to a second output of the forward channel gateway multiplexer;
- a first multiplexer coupled to the second switch that outputs data to a first plurality of regions; and
- a second multiplexer coupled to the fourth switch that outputs data to a second plurality of regions.

Claim 6 (original): The communication system recited in Claim 1 wherein the return communication link implemented in the communication satellite comprises:

- one or more regional multiplexers that receive data transmitted from subscriber terminals located in a plurality of regions;
- a plurality of third switches respectively coupled to the one or more regional multiplexers;
- one or more return channel gateway multiplexers selectively coupled to the plurality of third switches; and
- a plurality of fourth switches selectively coupled to the one or more return channel gateway multiplexers and plurality of third switches that output data to the one or more gateways.

Claim 7 (currently amended): The communication system recited in ~~Claim 4~~ Claim 6 wherein selected ones of the pluralities of third and fourth switches comprise power dividing hybrids.

Claim 8 (original): The communication system recited in Claim 1 wherein the return communication link implemented in the communication satellite comprises:

- a first multiplexer for receiving data transmitted from a first plurality of regions;
- a second multiplexer for receiving data transmitted from a second plurality of regions;
- a first switch coupled to the first multiplexer;
- a second switch coupled to the second multiplexer;
- a return channel gateway multiplexer selectively coupled to the first and second switches;
- a third switch selectively coupled to the first switch and the return channel gateway multiplexer that outputs data to a first gateway; and
- a fourth switch coupled to the third switch that outputs data to a second gateway.

Claim 9 (currently amended): The communication system recited in Claim 1 wherein each communication link implemented in the communication satellite comprises:

- one or more first switches that communicate with corresponding gateways;
- one or more gateway multiplexers coupled to the one or more first switches;
- one or more second switches selectively coupled to the one or more gateway multiplexers and selectively coupled to the one or more first switches; and
- one or more regional multiplexers coupled to the one or more second switches ~~that~~ that communicate with plurality of regions.

Claim 10 (original): The communication system recited in Claim 9 wherein selected ones of the first and second switches comprise power dividing hybrids.

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